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GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
(Tourism Branch)

NOTIFICATION

Adventure Tourism Policy for State of Punjab- 2023

The 14th March, 2023

No.Tour-10POLI/2/2023-3TC/445937/313.–

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. Punjab has the advantage of being one of the prosperous states in India. It has also the advantage of having a large number of Punjabi diasporas settled in other countries with roots deeply connected in Punjab. Situated enroute to most of the popular tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, it can serve as a halting place for lacs of tourists visiting Mata Vaishno Devi in J&K and Shimla, Dalhousie and other destinations in Himachal Pradesh. Punjab has already established itself as a preferred destination for the religious tourists with the most sacred place of Golden Temple in Amritsar attracting about 60 percent of the annual footfall of tourists in the State. The Golden Temple has also been recognized as the most visited place in the world. Even one of the most visited museum in Asia, Virasat-e-Khalsa is situated in Anandpur Sahib in Rupnagar district of Punjab. However, despite being the historical and ancient state, where remains of Harrapan era have been discovered, the heritage and other themes of tourism have not flourished as per its potential. As a result, emphasis has been given by the Punjab Government in the Punjab State Tourism Policy, 2018 for the promotion of the heritage, eco-tourism, cultural tourism, craft tourism and other themes of the tourism. In the Punjab State Tourism Policy, 2018, apart from chalking out strategies for the promotion of various other themes of tourism, introduction and promotion of the adventure tourism in the state has also been discussed.
- 1.2. The topography of Punjab has all the elements for the introduction of the adventure tourism in the State. The State is situated in the lap of the Shivalik hills. It has three major rivers namely Sutlej, Beas and Ravi. There are many large wetlands where water sports can be introduced. It is in this context that there is a need to have a separate adventure tourism policy for the State.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. “Adventure Sports” are activities undertaken through the medium of Land, Water and Air and perceived

as involving a certain degree of risk. These activities often involve speed, height, a high level of physical exertion and highly specialized gear.

- 2.2. "Department" means the Department of Tourism & Culture, Government of Punjab
- 2.3. "Government" shall mean the Government of Punjab in the Department of Tourism & Culture
- 2.4. "Investor" shall mean a person, company or firm desirous of investing time and monetary resources for setting up an Adventure Tourism Project in the State or for conducting an Adventure Sport within the State.
- 2.5. "Person" shall mean a human being, a body of persons, cooperative society or other legal entity that is recognized by law as the subject of rights and duties
- 2.6. "State" shall mean the State of Punjab
- 2.7. "Tourist" shall mean any person who visits an area for a short duration for recreational purpose
- 2.8. "Adventure Tourism Project" means any project established on an Adventure Tourism Site with the primary intention of conducting Adventure Sports.
- 2.9. "Adventure Tourism Site" shall mean any site, which is conducting Adventure Sports or if developed appropriately, has the potential of conducting Adventure Sports,

3. Theme of Adventure Tourism

- 3.1. The term adventure tourism can be defined as a type of niche tourism, involving exploration or travel with a certain degree of concerns which may require physical and mental strength or may require special skills and physical exertion. Adventure tourism attracts high value customers who are passionate and risk-taking.
- 3.2. As stated above, Punjab has all the elements in terms of topography and natural heritage to start the theme of adventure tourism. The major rivers and wetlands in Punjab have the potential to sustain water sports activities. There are six wetlands in Punjab which have been designated as wetlands of international importance known as Ramsar sites. More than 250 species of birds and around 1 lakh migratory birds can be seen on these sites. These wetlands attract avifauna from different parts of the world during the winter season and provide awesome opportunity to the environmentalist and bird watchers. However, addition of the adventure tourism in such areas will surely doubly enhance the experience of the tourists. Cycling, Nature Walk, Off-roading activities have already been organised and successfully done by different organizations in the State during the last few years. There is a need to introduce water sports and aero sports in the beginning to bring Punjab on the map of the adventure tourism sites in India such as Rappelling, River Crossing, zipline, flying fox, Bungee Jumping, Hot Air Ballooning, Helicopter Rides, Bike Rallies, Jungle Camping, Jungle Walk, Nature Walk, Caravan etc.
- 3.3. As per the policy for the diversification of tourism products of India, special attention is also being given by Government of India for the development of Adventure Tourism in the country. The Ministry of Tourism has already issued Guidelines for the Approval of Adventure Tour Operators, which is a voluntary scheme, open to all bona fide adventure tour operators. The Ministry of Tourism has also formulated a set guideline on Safety and Quality Norms on Adventure Tourism as basic minimum standards for adventure tourism activities.

4. Vision and Mission Statement

- 4.1. The vision is to introduce and promote adventure tourism in Punjab and the mission is to establish Punjab as a destination on the map of adventure tourism sites in India.

5. Strategy and Action Plan:**5.1. Introduction and regulation of the theme of the adventure tourism in the State of Punjab on sustainable basis.**

As stated above, the theme of adventure tourism has not earlier been promoted in the State, while there are areas where adventure tourism can be successfully implemented. Therefore a mechanism for the introduction of the selected sports for adventure tourism shall be developed and proper regulatory mechanism shall also be developed.

5.2. Selecting and exploring the sites having potential for the adventure tourism.

Punjab has the advantage of having diverse topography ranging between sub-mountainous terrains to its free-flowing rivers and beautiful wetlands where large number of migratory birds arrive every year. Punjab Government shall make endeavour for selecting suitable sites having potential for different types of adventure sports.

5.3. Development of infrastructure for adventure tourism

It is very important to develop infrastructure including the necessary amenities at the places selected for introducing the adventure sports. Government shall take necessary action to develop necessary infrastructure and public amenities so that the tourism in the area can be promoted.

5.4. Adopting branding techniques for the promotion of adventure tourism to reach to the national and international tourists.

Publicity is an important factor for the promotion of tourism in any theme. Government shall adopt latest branding techniques for the promotion of adventure tourism so that Punjab can also be established as a preferred destination for the adventure tourism for the domestic and international tourists.

5.5. Building capacity and developing quality human resource for tourism industry.

Skill development and training are very important factors for the success of any endeavour particularly in the case of adventure tourism where some element of risk is always involved. Government of India and Adventure Tourism Association of India has laid down safety for different types of the adventure tourism activities. Government shall undertake skill development and capacity building programs for making adventure tourism a sustainable activity.

5.6. Ensuring safety and security of the tourists.

The State Government shall follow the guidelines issued by the Adventure Tourism Association of India and the Government of India while practicing the adventure sports activities in the State.

5.7. To create enabling environment for investment for sustainable tourism.

The State Government shall create enabling environment for the investment by the private enterprises for the development of the adventure tourism on sustainable basis.

5.8. Sharing of revenue with the local communities:

The State Government shall develop mechanism for the sharing of the revenue received from the adventure tourism in the State with the local communities and the proceed shall be used for the development of the local areas in consultation with the Department of Finance.

5.9. To create employment opportunities

The State Government shall create more and more employment opportunities by developing Adventure Tourism facilities in the State.

5.10. Making optimum use of the central funds for Adventure Tourism.

Promotion of tourism is important not only for the economy of the State which contribute to the economy of the country. Government of India has devised number of schemes for the development of tourism including the adventure tourism in India. State Government shall make optimum use of the central funding in the development of the tourism in the State.

6. Incentives and concession:

- 6.1. The incentives given under the Industrial and Business Development Policy, shall also be available to investors for the development and implementation of the adventure tourism in the State of Punjab.

7. Approval of Projects

- 7.1. The Department of Tourism shall identify the sites with potential for adventure sports in consultation with various Departments of the State Government and offer the same on Licence basis for carrying out activities related to Adventure Sports.
- 7.2. Any interested person may also offer his privately owned site for Adventure Sports through the Department of Tourism, provided that such a person agrees to abide by the provisions of this policy
- 7.3. All sites identified by the Department of Tourism, or any private player in the preceding sub-section, shall be publicised widely for attracting investors.
- 7.4. Any National Adventure Sport Federation which is recognised by-
- a) Department of Sports, Government of India or
 - b) Department of Youth Affairs, Government of India or
 - c) An International Adventure Sport Federation or
 - d) A National Institute specialising in the training of a particular Adventure Sport and which receives regular financial assistance from Government of India

and which possesses a proven track record of conducting the Adventure Sport for a period of at least five years preceding the date of application, shall be offered free usage of these sites for a period of two years. The Federation shall in turn develop these sites for running the adventure sport and will be permitted to charge such fee, as it may determine, from the general public for participating in the adventure sport. The National Federation may also collaborate with any private partner(s) for offering Adventure Sports within the State.

- 7.5. After the expiry of the Licence period granted to a National Federation, the licence for usage of the site shall ordinarily be allotted to interested parties through a transparent bidding process. However, it shall be the discretion of the Empowered Committee, for reasons to be recorded in writing, to extend the Licence awarded to a National Federation beyond two years for such period and on such terms as may be decided by it.
- 7.6. Any entity offering an Adventure Sport with the usage of proprietary equipment may also be offered a licence of usage of a site free of cost in case it is felt that such a Sport is unique and has the potential to attract tourists. Such a licence shall be issued for a period of not more than two years and may be extended for one year at a time on mutually agreed terms.
- 7.7. Where a National Federation has not evinced interest in any particular site, and a single private entity has shown interest in it, the site may be offered on licence basis for a period of not more than two years through a transparent bidding process following Swiss Challenge methodology.
- 7.8. Where a National Federation has not evinced interest in any particular site, and two or more than one private entity has shown interest in it, the site may be offered on licence basis for a period of not

more than two years and transparent competitive bidding using 2- stage methodology viz Pre-Qualification followed by highest financial bid, shall be adopted. The provisions of “*The Punjab Transparency in Public Procurement Act, 2019*” and “*The Punjab Transparency in Public Procurement Rules, 2022*” shall be followed in this regard.

- 7.9. Permanent Brick & Mortar Construction at the site shall not be ordinarily permitted during the period of the licence.

8. Promotion of Adventure Sports

- 8.1. The Department of Tourism may enter into an agreement and support any organisation that has a proven track record in Adventure Tourism, provided that such an organisation undertakes to hold such events in the State. The support by the Department, on a case to case basis, may be financial or logistic or administrative. Financial assistance shall normally be confined to organisations conducting Adventure Sports Competitions and shall not normally be available to organisations establishing a permanent project within the State.
- 8.2. The Department of Tourism may undertake extensive promotion campaigns to support Adventure Sports in the State
- 8.3. The Government shall strive to provide the necessary infrastructure such as power, rural roads, etc for facilitating the promotion of Adventure Sports in the State.
- 8.4. The Empowered Committee may grant special rights, on a case to case basis, over land, water and air for the successful conduct of the Adventure Sport

9. Liability

- 9.1. The liability of the National Federation or the private entity, issued a Licence under Section 6, for the safe conduct of the Adventure Sport shall be unlimited. It shall meticulously, adhere to the safety protocols notified from time to time and shall fully indemnify the State Government and/or any of its organs from any liability in this regard.

10. Cancellation or Suspension of Licence

- 10.1. Any Licence issued under Section 6 may be revoked or suspended at any time by the Empowered Committee on the occurrence of any or all of the following events-
- Any violation of the Terms & Conditions of the Licence
 - Any wilful disobedience of Law
 - Non-adherence of mandatory safety protocols
- 10.2. No order of revocation of Licence shall be passed without affording an opportunity of hearing
- 10.3. The Department may, at its discretion, order an inquiry to ascertain the facts before taking a decision of suspension or revocation of Licence.

11. Implementation mechanism

- 11.1. In order to implement this policy, the State Government shall establish various committees with their constitution and responsibilities as under:

Empowered Committee

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| a) Chief Minister | Chairman |
| b) Tourism & Cultural Affairs Minister | Vice-Chairman |
| c) Minister(s) of the Department(s) related to any proposal to be placed before the Committee | Member |

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- | | |
|---|------------------|
| d) Chief Secretary | Member |
| e) Principal Secretary Finance | Member |
| f) Administrative Secretary of the Department(s)
related to any proposal to be placed before the Committee | Member |
| g) Principal Secretary Tourism & Cultural Affairs | Member Secretary |
| h) Any other person may be called as a Special Invitee with the permission of the Chairman | |

The Empowered Committee shall-

- a) Lay down the broad vision for the promotion of Adventure Tourism in the State.
- b) Approve the various Adventure Sports to be promoted in specific Districts/ sites across the State.
- c) Approve the sites allotted for Adventure Sports through a bidding process
- d) Approve the Adventure Sports projects recommended by the Executive Committee

The Empowered Committee shall meet at such intervals as may be approved by the Chairman.

Executive Committee

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| a) Tourism & Cultural Affairs Minister | Chairman |
| b) Principal Secretary, Tourism & Cultural Affairs | Member |
| c) Secretary Mandi Board | Member |
| d) Director Rural Development & Panchayats | Member |
| e) Director, Sports | Member |
| f) Chief Conservator of Forests (Territorial) | Member |
| g) Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) | Member |
| h) Chief Engineer, Canals | Member |
| i) Chief Engineer, Drainage | Member |
| j) Chief Engineer PWD | Member |
| k) Chief General Manager, PHTPB | Member |
| l) Nominee of the Principal Secretary Finance | Member |
| m) Nominee of DGP | Member |
| n) Director, Tourism & Cultural Affairs | Member Secretary |
| o) Any other person may be called as a Special Invitee with the permission of the Chairman | |

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for

- a) Liaison with various Departments of the State and Central Government and obtaining the necessary approvals for operationalising the sites approved by the Empowered Committee to promote Adventure Sports.
- b) Interacting with various private sector entities engaged in adventure sports to facilitate ease of doing business in the state.
- c) Notifying the mandatory safety protocols to be followed in each Adventure Sport.
- d) Recommending to the Empowered Committee any suitable project submitted by a Public / Private entity for offering Adventure Sports in the State.

- e) Issuing necessary directions from time to time for executing the decisions of the Empowered Committee.

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once a month. All pending proposals for offering Adventure Sports in the State, irrespective of whether such a proposal meets the mandatory requirements or not, shall be placed before the Executive Committee for appropriate decision. The Executive Committee may call upon the proposer to appear before it and answer such queries as it may deem appropriate.

District Level Committee

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Deputy Commissioner | Chairman |
| 2. SSP | Member |
| 3. DFO | Member |
| 4. DFO Wildlife | Member |
| 5. District Sports Officer | Member |
| 6. Xen Canals | Member |
| 7. Xen Drainage | Member |
| 8. DEO (Primary) | Member |
| 9. DEO (Secondary) | Member |
| 10. DPRO | Member |
| 11. Nominee of the Director, Civil Aviation | Member |
| 12. Nominee of the Tourism Department | Member |
| 13. ADC (Development) | Member Secretary |
| 14. Any other person may be called as a Special Invitee with the permission of the Chairman | |

The District Level committee will be responsible for

- a) Operationalising and encouraging Adventure Sports in the District.
- b) Facilitating ease of doing business of Adventure Sports within the District
- c) Supporting the National Federations / private entrepreneurs, who are offering Adventure Sports
- d) Ensuring that mandatory safety protocols are being adhered to.
- e) Once a Licence under Section 6 has been issued, no additional clearances shall be required at the level of the District Level Committee.

The District Level Committee shall meet at least once a month.

Sd/-

GURKIRAT KIRPAL SINGH, IAS

Secretary to Government of Punjab
Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs

Chandigarh
The 13th March, 2023